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UNITED NATIONS PENSION SYSTEM

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. 1/ The Committee also had before it the report of the Secretary-General on the investments of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF). 2/ During consideration of these matters, the Committee met with representatives of the secretariat of UNJSPF and, with regard to the Fund's investments, with the representative of the Secretary-General.

II. ACTUARIAL MATTERS

2. The report of the Pension Board deals with actuarial matters in paragraphs 17 to 95, including in particular the results of the twenty-second actuarial valuation of the Fund as at 31 December 1993 presented in paragraphs 17 to 55. The Committee notes that the previous valuation was prepared as of 31 December 1990 and reflected the Regulations and the pension adjustment system in effect on that date but that subsequent valuations will be carried out every two years.

3. As regards the valuation results and additional disclosures, the Committee notes that the report also deals with the requests made by the General Assembly in resolution 47/203 of 22 December 1992 and 48/225 of 23 December 1993. In this connection, the Pension Board was requested to consider the form in which it presented the results of actuarial valuations, taking into account the views of the Committee of Actuaries and the Board of Auditors. The auditors had requested that the results of the actuarial valuation of the Fund be presented

in dollar terms and provide information on the net assets available for benefits, the changes in net assets and an actuarial present value of promised retirement benefits. 3/

4. The Committee notes that a set of economic assumptions were approved by the Pension Board and served as the basis for the regular valuation. These are described in paragraph 25. The results of the regular valuation are described in paragraphs 26 and 27 of the Board's report. The Committee notes, as discussed in paragraph 41 of the Board's report, that when the imbalance is expressed in dollar terms, it should be considered in relation to the magnitude of the liabilities of the Fund rather than in absolute terms. Under the regular valuation assumptions, as at 31 December 1993, the imbalance is 1.49 per cent of pensionable remuneration (an increase of 0.92 per cent over the imbalance as at 31 December 1990); the projected deficit in dollar terms represents 4.3 per cent of the projected liabilities, as compared with 1.8 per cent as at 31 December 1990. In order to place the imbalance in its proper perspective, the Committee was provided with a table showing the actuarial imbalances of the Fund since 1980, expressed as a percentage of pensionable remuneration, in United States dollars and as a percentage of projected liabilities, as well as the actions taken by the General Assembly, based on recommendations from the Pension Board. This is reproduced as annex I to the present document.

5. As indicated in paragraph 41 of the Board's report, the Advisory Committee further notes that the imbalance does not indicate a shortfall in the Fund's ability to meet current obligations, but it indicates the future effects of continuing the current contribution rate under the actuarial assumptions. The Committee was informed that significant elements increasing the imbalance in the regular valuation were (a) the interest accumulating on the imbalance in the Fund as of the previous valuation, (b) revised mortality tables used for non-disabled retired male and female participants, widows and widowers, reflecting longer life expectancy and (c) changes in the demographic composition and pensionable remuneration of future new entrants. These were partially offset by the net positive effect of changes in the value of United States dollars on the net benefit increase payable on behalf of retired and deceased participants and on the scales of pensionable remuneration of General Service staff.

6. The Advisory Committee notes that the valuation results are highly dependent on the underlying economic and demographic assumptions used in the actuarial valuation. The Committee notes that the assumption on the future participant growth (i.e., "20-year participant growth" assumption) heavily influences the results of the valuation. It also observes from table 1 of the Secretary-General's report that the real rates of return of the Fund's investments over the last 10 years have been greater than 3.0 per cent (the assumption for the real rate of return), with an average annual rate of return over the last 34 years of 3.5 per cent.

7. On a "plan termination basis" (art. 26 of the UNJSPF Regulations and Rules), the Committee was informed that the Fund was in a strongly funded position, as it had more assets than needed to pay the pensions if no adjustments were made in pensions for changes in the cost of living. The Committee notes, however, as discussed in paragraph 31 of the Board's report,

that the Fund's position changes drastically when account is taken of the assumption that benefits would increase at the rate of inflation of 6.0 per cent per year. In the first instance, the ratio of the actuarial value of assets to the actuarial value of the accrued benefits is 136.2 per cent (i.e., the assets provide a 36.2 per cent security margin) and in the second case, with the cost-of-living adjustment of 6.0 per cent per year, the actuarial ratio drops to 80 per cent (i.e., the assets are short by about 20 per cent to cover liabilities).

8. The Committee notes that the Pension Board accepted the recommendation of the Committee of Actuaries that "based on the results contained in the valuation report, and after consideration of further relevant indicators and calculations ... the present contribution rate of 23.7 per cent of pensionable remuneration could be maintained for funding purposes, pending a review at the time of the next valuation, as at 31 December 1995" and that there is "no need to take other measures to reduce the actuarial imbalance". 4/ The Advisory Committee also notes that it is the Pension Board's intention to review the need for action at the time of the next scheduled valuation as at 31 December 1995 in the light of developments between now and the completion of the next valuation. The Advisory Committee is of the view that the situation calls for careful and active monitoring, for the purpose of identifying measures to be taken to correct the actuarial imbalance, if need be.

9. As regards the interest (discount) rate applicable to lump-sum commutation of periodic benefits under article 28 (g) of the Regulations of the Fund, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Pension Board decided to retain the current 6.5 per cent discount rate, which would be reviewed again by the Standing Committee next year, and to request the Committee of Actuaries to develop a revised unisex mortality table, based on the longevity assumptions used in the regular valuation as at 31 December 1993. The Committee notes that the Pension Board agreed to recommend to the General Assembly the implementation of the revised unisex mortality table in determining lump-sum commutations, as of the first day of the month following the Standing Committee meeting (i.e., 1 July 1995). This is expected to result in an actuarial cost of 0.1 per cent of the pensionable remuneration. 5/

10. The Advisory Committee further notes that from paragraph 65 of the Board's report, as estimated by the Consulting Actuary, based on the regular valuation as at 31 December 1993, the interest rate of 6.5 per cent per year used to calculate the lump-sum commutations permits a reduction in the required rate of contributions of 1.79 per cent of pensionable remuneration, compared with the contribution rate that would be required if a uniform discount rate of 3.0 per cent were applied for future service. In this connection, the Committee of Actuaries has cautioned against frequent changes in the discount rate. It was noted that, for staff with long contributory service, the composite rate applied is in effect lower than the nominal 6.5 per cent, because of the application of low interest rates in earlier years. The Advisory Committee trusts that the views of the Committee of Actuaries in this regard will be taken into account by the Standing Committee in 1995 when this matter will be reviewed again.

11. In addition to the issues mentioned above, the Pension Board, as shown in paragraph 83 of its report, agreed by consensus to recommend to the General Assembly for implementation, with effect from 1 July 1995, a number of other changes in the United Nations pension system. The Committee notes that the package of measures as recommended by the Pension Board to the General Assembly for implementation, with effect of 1 July 1995, is expected to result in an overall actuarial savings of 0.04 per cent of pensionable remuneration. 6/

III. INVESTMENTS OF THE PENSION FUND

12. The market value of the Fund's assets increased to US$ 12,534 million on 31 March 1994 from US$ 11,407 million on 31 March 1993, an increase of US$ 1,127 million, or a total investment return of 9.7 per cent, which, after being adjusted for inflation, results in a "real" rate of return of 7.0 per cent. 7/ The Committee notes from table 1 of the Secretary-General's report that for the past 10 years the compound annual nominal and real rates of return of 12.8 per cent and 8.8 per cent, respectively, were higher as compared to those for the longer period of 34 years for which data were available (8.6 per cent and 3.5 per cent, respectively).

13. Upon inquiry as to how the Fund's investment performance would compare with other pension funds or benchmark indicators, it was explained that, during the last few years, the investment returns of the World Bank's pension fund had outperformed those of UNJSPF. With regard to other indicators, it was noted that the Morgan Stanley Capital International World Index (MSCI World) and the Salomon Brothers World Bond Index (weighted) provided a reasonable and widely published approximation of an international equity portfolio and an international bond portfolio respectively. Over the last 16 years, MSCI World had a total annualized return of 14.2 per cent, compared to an annualized return of 13.4 per cent achieved by the Fund's total equities. Over the same period the Salomon Brothers World Bond Index had an annualized return of 11.3 per cent compared to an annualized return of 11.4 per cent achieved by the Fund's bond portfolio.

14. The Committee points out that, in comparing the rate of return achieved by UNJSPF with the rates achieved elsewhere or benchmark indicators, it should be borne in mind that there are difficulties in comparing portfolio performances owing to differences in timing of cash flows, investment restrictions, investment objectives, quality standards and levels of acceptable risk. All investment decisions of the Fund are required to meet the criteria of safety, profitability, liquidity and convertibility, which have been advocated repeatedly by the Pension Board, the Advisory Committee and the General Assembly. The Fund follows a policy of broad diversification of its investments by type of security, industry groups, countries and currencies.

IV. CUSTODIAL ARRANGEMENTS

15. The Advisory Committee recalls that, in its last report on the United Nations pension system, 8/ it noted that investment costs were expected to decrease as a result of economies in advisory and custodial fees under a custody

structure expected to be implemented by mid-1994. In this regard, the Committee requested that a summary of a report on custodial arrangements of the Fund be included in the next report of the Pension Board to the General Assembly. The report should address all related aspects, including legal and security issues, as well as the cost-effectiveness of the new arrangements.

16. The Committee notes that paragraphs 107 to 114 of the Board's report deal with the issue of custodial arrangements. The Committee was informed that, under the new custodial arrangements, the safety of the assets will be ensured by diversifying the number of custodians. The new arrangements call for direct relationship with a limited number of regional custodians, all of which are based in well-developed markets. This provides the level of counterpart risk diversification that the Fund will require. A Master Record Keeper will consolidate all data and perform accounting and record-keeping functions. In addition, under these arrangements, all the Fund's assets will be held in the name of the United Nations for UNJSPF and held separately from the assets of the United Nations, the custodian and all other clients.

17. Under the previous arrangements, from 1946 to 1989, the custodial and advisory services were contracted to Fiduciary Trust Company International (FTCI) under one single contract. FTCI subcontracted global custodial services to the Royal Bank of Scotland, which in turn subcontracted custodial services locally around the world. Under that arrangement, all assets of the Pension Fund were registered in the name of the Royal Bank of Scotland for the account of FTCI. The Fund had no direct control over the custodial arrangements made by FTCI and the Royal Bank of Scotland. Since 1989, two separate contracts for advisory and for custodial services have been signed with FTCI. As a global custodian, FTCI subcontracted custodial arrangements to local subcustodians. For the years 1992 and 1993, the Committee was informed that the total costs for these services were $5,921,221 and $5,979,950, respectively.

18. For the year 1994, the Committee was informed, the expenses incurred by the Fund would be a result of part of the year under the old arrangement with FTCI and part of the year under the new arrangements. Based on the existing contracts with FTCI and the new custodians, in 1994 those expenses are anticipated to be $3,315,940 payable to FTCI and $1,561,800 combined fees payable to the Master Record Keeper and the new custodians. Savings in custody fees of over $1 million are expected in 1994. In 1995, based on existing contracts the total custody fees are expected to be approximately $2.7 million.

19. The Advisory Committee notes that these arrangements are expected to enhance the security of assets, while achieving significant cost reductions in the investment management operations. Upon inquiry, the Committee was assured that the arrangements would also enhance investment management control and the operational efficiency of the Fund. The Committee is of the view that the new arrangements should be monitored closely to ensure that the expected goals are indeed attained.

V. INVESTMENTS COMMITTEE

20. The Advisory Committee points out, as indicated in paragraph 129 of the Board's report, that in accordance with article 20 of the Regulations and Rules of UNJSPF,

> "the Investments Committee shall consist of nine members appointed by the Secretary-General after consultation with the Board and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly."

21. From paragraph 133 of the report, the Advisory Committee notes that the current composition of the Investments Committee includes, in addition to the nine members confirmed by the General Assembly under article 20 for renewable three-year terms, two ad hoc members appointed by the Secretary-General for one-year terms. Upon inquiry, the Committee was informed that, in all respects, with the exception of the procedure for their appointment and their term of office, the regular and ad hoc members have carried out the same function, with no distinction among them.

22. With regard to the primary objective in making appointments to the Investment Committee, the Advisory Committee concurs with the view, as reaffirmed by the Board in paragraph 144, that appointments "should be made to ensure a high-level investment expertise in the Committee, taking into account the global investment policy of the Fund and the major areas of the investment decision-making process, overall asset allocation and strategy, the selection of companies and securities in which the Fund should invest and the timing of investments". Furthermore, the Advisory Committee recalls the principle that, as in the case of membership in other expert committees, no two members shall be nationals of the same State, and members should be selected on the basis of broad geographical representation, personal qualifications and experience.

23. The Advisory Committee notes the Board's conclusion in paragraph 145 "that a recommendation to the General Assembly to amend article 20 of the Regulations to enlarge the size of the Investments Committee should be deferred".

VI. INTERNAL AUDITS OF THE FUND'S OPERATIONS

24. The United Nations Board of Auditors, the External Auditors of the Pension Fund, addressed the issue of the internal audit coverage of the Pension Fund's activities in its report to the General Assembly on the accounts of UNJSPF for the year ended 31 December 1993. 9/ The Board of Auditors noted that for the past several years the internal audit of the activities of UNJSPF had been infrequent and coverage inadequate. Recognizing that the internal audit function was an essential part of the overall internal control mechanism of the organization, the Board of Auditors recommended that consideration be given either to formally designating the Office of Inspections and Investigations as the internal auditors of the Fund or alternatively establishing arrangements for a separate internal audit function for the activities of the Fund.

25. The Advisory Committee welcomes the Board of Auditors' comments in this regard. It notes, however, that investment activities carried out by the United Nations Investment Management Service for the Pension Fund may be audited without restrictions by the United Nations Internal Audit Division, as these are managed by the Secretary-General. In this regard, the Advisory Committee requests the Pension Board to present to the Advisory Committee the financial implications of the two options mentioned by the Board of Auditors in the context of the budget proposal for the biennium 1996-1997. Taking into account the inter-agency nature of the Fund's operation, the internal audit function should be structured so as to ensure a wide coverage of the Fund's activities. It should provide the Pension Board and its executive management with a systematic and independent review mechanism of the Fund's operations for the purpose of improving its management practices and the overall efficiency and economy of its operations.

VII. ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

26. In section III of resolution 48/225 of 23 December 1993, the General Assembly approved expenses for the administration of the Pension Fund, chargeable to the Fund, in the amount of $39,291,900 (net) for the biennium 1994-1995, comprising $12,609,200 for administrative costs and $26,682,700 for investment costs.

27. As indicated in paragraph 293 of its report, the Board has submitted revised estimates for the administrative expenses of the Pension Fund for 1994-1995 amounting to $39,682,100. The proposed increase of $390,200 over the approved appropriations is for administrative costs, consisting of $315,200 for temporary assistance, $25,000 for travel and related costs and $50,000 for data-processing costs. No changes in the investment cost estimates are proposed.

28. The Advisory Committee was informed that the request for temporary assistance is necessary as a result of significant increases in the backlog of work, which has been exacerbated more recently by the need to recalculate the pension benefits of over 850 former Geneva-based General Service staff as a result of retroactive revisions of the 1991, 1992 and 1993 General Service salary scales in Geneva, in response to a judgement of the International Law Commission Administrative Tribunal (ILO AT Judgement #1265, Berlioz et al.). The temporary assistance estimate of $315,200 is based on the standard costs of 3 General Service staff (2 in Geneva and 1 in New York) for 18 months each. As most of the work will be carried out in Geneva, a senior General Service staff member will be redeployed from New York to Geneva for a period of up to four months to train the Geneva staff in the retirement benefit calculation procedures. On the basis of the information provided, the Advisory Committee has no objection to the proposal.

29. Upon request, the Committee was furnished with detailed calculations and specifications for the computer hardware and software systems in Geneva. The Committee agrees with the Board's proposal that it is in the best interest of efficiency to purchase the required equipment at this time, particularly in view of the expanding role of the Geneva Office in the area of calculating, processing and paying benefits.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 9 (A/49/9).

2/ A/C.5/49/3.

3/ Official Records of the General Assembly, ibid., para. 32.

4/ Ibid., paras. 45 and 47.

5/ Ibid., paras. 70 and 71.

6/ Ibid., annex VI.

7/ Ibid., para. 98.

8/ A/48/517, paras. 16 and 17.

9/ Official Records of the General Assembly, ibid., annex III, paras. 61-64.

Annex I

EVOLUTION OF THE ACTUARIAL IMBALANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS JOINT STAFF PENSION FUND SINCE 1980

A. Imbalance as a percentage of pensionable remuneration, in United States dollars, and as a percentage of projected liabilities

Valuation date	Required rate of contribution	Imbalance		
		Percentage of pensionable remuneration	Millions of dollars	Percentage of projected liabilities
31 December 1980	27.82	6.82 a/	5 315.7	22.0
31 December 1982				
(a) Before 1/1/1983 changes	29.41	8.41 a/	7 057.6	25.6
(b) After 1/1/1983 changes	25.72	4.79 a/	4 018.4	16.4
31 December 1984				
(a) Before 1/1/1984 and 1/1/1985 changes	25.94	4.94 a/	4 490.6	16.5
(b) After 1/1/1984 and 1/1/1985 changes	24.76	3.01 b/	2 734.3	10.4
31 December 1986	26.15	4.40 b/	3 187.2	13.2
31 December 1988	26.21	3.71 c/	3 133.4	10.9
31 December 1990				
After 1/1/1990 measures	24.27	0.57 d/	641.0	1.8
31 December 1993 e/	25.19 e/	1.49 d/	1 857.1	4.3

a/ Excess over contribution rate of 21 per cent.

b/ Excess over contribution rate of 21.75 per cent.

c/ Excess over contribution rate of 22.50 per cent.

d/ Excess over contribution rate of 23.70 per cent.

e/ Includes impact of demographic changes, particularly those related to longer life expectancy of pensioners. The net impact was to increase the imbalance by 1.02 per cent of pensionable remuneration.

B. Actions taken by the General Assembly on the Pension Fund's actuarial situation, 1982-1989

Effective 1 January 1983 (General Assembly resolution 37/131)

1. Lowered the rates of benefit accumulation for new Fund participants.

2. Raised interest rate for lump-sum commutation from 4 to 4.5 per cent.

3. Reduced frequency of cost-of-living adjustment of pensions to twice a year, with trigger point raised from 3 to 5 per cent.

4. Eliminated adjustment of deferred pensions until participant reaches age 50.

5. Eliminated the return to the employing organizations of one half of the contribution made on behalf of participants leaving with less than five years of contributory services.

6. Reduced qualifying period for Fund participation from one year to six months.

Effective 1 January 1984 (General Assembly resolution 38/233)

1. Increased contribution rate from 21 to 21.75 per cent of pensionable remuneration.

Effective 1 January 1985 (General Assembly resolution 39/246)

1. Raised the interest rate for lump-sum commutations from 4.5 to 6.5 per cent.

2. Increased the reduction factor for early retirement for participants leaving with between 25 and 30 years of contributory service.

3. Reduced the pensionable remuneration of staff in the Professional and higher categories.

4. Reduced frequency of cost-of-living adjustment of pensions to once a year, with trigger point of 3 per cent.

5. Reduced first cost-of-living adjustment by 1.5 percentage points.

6. Established 120 per cent cap for those on the two-track pension adjustment system.

7. Implemented special index for pensioners.

8. For new beneficiaries, changed the date monthly pensions became payable to the end of the month.

9. Advanced date for payment of monthly contributions by the member organizations to within the first two working days of the month.

Effective 1 April 1986 (General Assembly resolution 40/245)

1. Imposed ceiling on highest levels of pensions.

Effective 1 April 1987 (General Assembly resolution 41/208)

1. Reduced further the pensionable remuneration of staff in the Professional and higher categories.

2. Placed ceiling on the maximum amount of lump-sum commutations.

Effective 1 July 1988 (General Assembly resolution 42/222)

1. Increased contribution rate from 21.75 to 22.2 per cent of pensionable remuneration.

Effective 1 July 1989 (General Assembly resolution 42/222)

1. Increased contribution rate from 22.2 to 22.5 per cent of pensionable remuneration.

Effective 1 January 1990 (General Assembly resolution 44/199)

1. Increased the normal retirement age for new participants from 60 to 62.

2. Eliminated cost-of-living adjustments of future deferred retirement benefits until the participant reaches age 55.

3. Increased contribution rate from 22.5 to 23.7 per cent.

Annex II

UNITED NATIONS JOINT STAFF PENSION FUND:
TOTAL RETURN

31 March 1985-31 March 1994

March	Nominal rate	Real rate
1994	9.7	7.00
1993	11.60	8.20
1992	7.60	4.30
1991	8.90	3.80
1990	11.56	6.03
1989	5.90	0.90
1988	3.10	(0.80)
1987	24.69	22.00
1986	41.52	38.10
1985	8.09	4.40

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REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, QUESTIONS RELATING TO REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS

New international humanitarian order

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its forty-seventh session, the General Assembly, in its resolution 47/106 of 16 December 1992, taking note of the reports of the Secretary-General, 1/ urged Governments as well as governmental and non-governmental organizations that had not yet done so to provide their comments and expertise to the Secretary-General regarding the humanitarian order and the report of the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues. The Assembly invited Governments to make available to the Secretary-General, on a voluntary basis, information and expertise on humanitarian issues of concern to them in order to identify opportunities for future action. It called upon Governments, the United Nations system and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations further to develop international cooperation in the humanitarian field and reiterated that international cooperation in that field would facilitate better understanding, mutual respect, confidence and tolerance among countries and peoples, thus contributing to a more just and non-violent world. The Assembly invited the Independent Bureau for Humanitarian Issues to continue and further strengthen its essential role in following up the work of the Independent Commission and encouraged the international community to contribute substantially and regularly to the international humanitarian activities required to promote a new humanitarian order. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to remain in contact with Governments as well as governmental and non-governmental organizations and the Independent Bureau for Humanitarian Issues and to report on the progress made by them to the Assembly at its forty-ninth session. It also decided to review at its forty-ninth session the question of a new international humanitarian order.

2. Pursuant to the provisions of the aforementioned resolution, the Secretary-General on 15 February and 9 June 1994 addressed communications to Governments requesting their contributions, views or information on the progress made by them in implementation of the resolution. Inquiries were also addressed to specialized agencies of the United Nations system, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and to the Independent Commission for Humanitarian Issues.

3. As at 4 October 1994, comments on the topic had been received from the Governments of Croatia, Ethiopia and Zambia. Comments were also received from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the secretariat of the League of Arab States (LAS) and from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The text of these replies are reproduced in the annexes to the present report.

II. REVIEW OF THE QUESTION OF A NEW INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ORDER

4. The item entitled "New international humanitarian order" was first included in the agenda of the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly. At that session, the Assembly, in resolution 36/136 of 14 December 1981, requested the

Secretary-General to seek the views of Governments on the proposal for the promotion of a new international humanitarian order.

5. In pursuance of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly on this question since 1981, the Secretary-General has been regularly transmitting to the Assembly views or information from Governments and organizations on questions relating to their respective humanitarian concerns.

6. In reviewing the question of a new humanitarian order, as called for by the General Assembly in paragraph 9 of its resolution 47/106, the Secretary-General wishes to draw the attention of Governments to recent important efforts that have been made by the United Nations in order to respond more effectively to challenges posed by the increasing number and complexity of humanitarian emergencies world wide and to promoting the respect of human rights. These efforts are consistent with the basic provisions of the resolutions of the Assembly in promoting a new international humanitarian order.

7. In this context, it will be recalled that at its forty-sixth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 46/182, entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations", in which it called for the establishment of a new framework for international cooperation in the field of emergency humanitarian assistance. Subsequently, in April 1992, pursuant to the aforementioned resolution, the Secretary-General established the Department of Humanitarian Affairs headed by an Under-Secretary-General who also serves as the Emergency Relief Coordinator for humanitarian activities of the United Nations and related organizations.

8. The Emergency Relief Coordinator, supported by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs works closely with the operational agencies of the United Nations and Governments, both donor and recipient countries, in facilitating a timely and comprehensive response to humanitarian crises around the world. New mechanisms for strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance include the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, which is chaired by the Emergency Relief Coordinator and is composed of the executive heads of the United Nations operational agencies, ICRC and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations; a US$ 50 million Central Emergency Revolving Fund for utilization by operational organizations at the early stages of an emergency, and the consolidated appeal process to assess the needs of an emergency situation and prepare a response strategy.

9. Furthermore, since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 46/182, more systematic efforts have been initiated to enhance the role of the United Nations to serve as an advocate for humanitarian principles and mandate. These include promoting the human dimension of crisis situations, negotiating access of relief supplies to the affected populations, protecting relief personnel and emphasizing the adverse and unintended effects of sanctions upon vulnerable groups. More recently, the United Nations has also been actively involved in addressing humanitarian aspects of post-conflict reconstruction, including reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons, mine-clearance and demobilization of former combatants, as well as developing durable solutions to humanitarian crises.

10. Efforts have also been made to strengthen public understanding of, and support for humanitarian assistance activities including promoting respect for the principles and rules of international humanitarian law. A more systematic analysis of humanitarian problems has been applied which provides for a comprehensive examination of economic, environmental, social, political and other relevant factors which may precipitate a humanitarian crisis or affect its development.

11. In his annual report entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations" (A/49/177 and Add.1), submitted to the General Assembly at its present session, the Secretary-General outlined recent efforts of the United Nations system to respond to the extraordinary challenges presented by the complexity and range of the humanitarian emergencies. In addition, the Secretary-General has also submitted reports on humanitarian assistance provided to Angola, Azerbaijan, Liberia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Somalia and the Sudan, in which he highlighted the specific humanitarian problems of those countries as well as United Nations efforts to address those problems in a comprehensive manner.

12. Further, following recommendations made at the World Conference on Human Rights, the General Assembly in resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993, established the post of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights with a mandate that spans the whole range of human rights concerns.

13. In the light of the developments outlined above, key aspects relevant to the development of a new humanitarian order are not being comprehensively addressed within the new framework established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/182 and subsequent related resolutions for strengthening the capacity of the United Nations system to respond to humanitarian emergencies.

14. Bearing in mind the measures taken over the past few years by the General Assembly to rationalize and streamline its agenda and to avoid duplication of efforts, Member States may wish to review the necessity of receiving separate reports of the Secretary-General on this question under a separate agenda item, as provided by the Assembly in its decision 48/431 of 20 December 1993. The Secretary-General will include all relevant information in subsequent reports submitted to the Assembly covering humanitarian issues and human rights concerns under the appropriate items of its agenda.

Notes

1/ A/37/145, A/38/450, A/40/348 and Add.1 and 2, A/41/472, A/43/734 and Add.1, A/45/524 and A/47/352.

ANNEX

Replies received from Governments, specialized agencies and intergovernmental and other organizations

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I. REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

CROATIA

[28 June 1994]

1. The Republic of Croatia is concerned about widespread violations of international humanitarian law and stresses the need to strengthen international responses to growing human suffering and to undertake international action in order to alleviate this suffering. It is important to specify the role of the international community in ensuring respect for international humanitarian law and its reaction in a situation when a party or parties to a conflict deliberately violates the principles and rules of international humanitarian law.

2. It is important to examine the manner and type of cooperation of States within the United Nations or other international forums in the event of serious violations of international humanitarian law and to provide a mechanism for redoubling the efforts of the international community to protect and assist victims of conflict.

3. The Republic of Croatia has accepted a large number of refugees from the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and has at the same time encountered shortcomings in international mechanisms for the protection of refugees and displaced persons and the ineffectiveness of burden-sharing arrangements. Notably, there is a moral obligation for other countries to help only the first recipient country in taking care of refugees. Consequently, the international community - States acting jointly or through the United Nations - must consider appropriate measures to lighten the burden of the first recipient State in taking care of refugees and to achieve a greater degree of international cooperation in this area.

ETHIOPIA

[6 July 1994]

The Transitional Government of Ethiopia strongly supports the United Nations in promoting the following activities, which are of special concern to the Ethiopian authorities in relation to the question of the new international humanitarian order: alleviation of the ever-escalating problem of poverty and famine; the question of human development, which should be given due attention in every development endeavour and in the activities of international financial institutions; conflict prevention and resolution; the close study of the question of the world's high number of refugees and displaced people, in order to look for durable solutions; further strengthening international and regional cooperation, the reduction and diversion of the world's military expenditure to the development of the developing countries; the utilization of creative initiatives to deal with the question of unemployment; and enhancing the role of the United Nations in international economic activities.

ZAMBIA

[17 June 1994]

1. The Government of Zambia is convinced that solving humanitarian problems requires international cooperation and the harmonization of actions taken by Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as by individuals. The Government of Zambia also recognizes with concern the continuing need to strengthen further international responses to growing humanitarian challenges and to undertake creative humanitarian action at the international, regional and national levels to alleviate human suffering and to promote durable solutions to humanitarian problems.

2. There must be increased concerted efforts by all Members of the United Nations to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child to ensure the protection of the child from poor nutrition, disease and abuse and that the rights of the child to basic needs, including food, clothing, shelter, health and education, are respected and prioritized in national policies.

3. The international community should respond positively to the civil war situations existing in developing countries which have resulted in the displacement of millions of people, including children, women and the disabled, who are the most affected.

II. REPLIES RECEIVED FROM SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

[4 August 1994]

1. In addition to its cooperation with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, UNESCO aims in its contribution to international cooperation in the humanitarian field at facilitating better understanding, mutual respect, confidence and tolerance among individuals and in society as a whole. UNESCO activities for the promotion of a "culture of peace" and the comprehensive programme the Secretariat is developing for the United Nations Year for Tolerance (1995), proclaimed by the General Assembly, are most relevant in this context, to the extent that they aim to contribute to lasting solutions to some deep-rooted problems. The emphasis is put on elaboration of anticipatory educational strategies with a view to preventing the outbreak of violent conflict and the related human rights violations. For instance, the organization is now carrying out a culture of peace programme in El Salvador in order to reconcile and reconstruct the society in that country, and is establishing a similar programme in Mozambique, which will be carried out in cooperation with other United Nations organizations. The El Salvador and Mozambique programmes may be expanded subsequently at the subregional level.

2. UNESCO also promotes research in international law as it relates to humanitarian issues and improved exchange of information on, and dissemination of, international humanitarian law.

3. In the promotion of international law and humanitarian law (including such concepts as the "right to be assisted" and the "rights of future generations"), which are relevant to a new international humanitarian order, UNESCO will, inter alia, organize in cooperation with the United Nations an international workshop as a contribution to the United Nations Decade of International Law and implement the World Plan of Action on Education for Human Rights and Democracy adopted by the Montreal Congress (March 1993) and endorsed in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

4. As regards humanitarian assistance, UNESCO activities bear primarily on education for refugees and displaced persons in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), on reconstruction and rehabilitation in its fields of competence, and prevention and mitigation of the risks and consequences of natural disasters, especially in the framework of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.

5. In 1993 UNESCO initiated a scheme of humanitarian assistance for refugee education, which is a comprehensive education programme for refugees and displaced persons using all its components (e.g., educational programmes, materials, personnel, managers) to cope, at the same time, with specific emergency needs of the target groups, and to provide basic education in the spirit of equal educational opportunity, with a view to preparing the reconstruction process.

6. Together with other organizations of the United Nations system, UNESCO has participated in emergency assistance programmes and reconstruction operations (including rehabilitation of schools) in the field of education in such countries as Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Croatia, Iraq, Lebanon, Mozambique and Somalia, as well as the occupied Arab territories. A special programme has since been developed for assistance to the Palestinian people.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

[11 July 1994]

Right to health

1. The right to health is one of the fundamental human rights and is included in all human rights laws, the International Bill of Human Rights, humanitarian law, the Refugee Law and the WHO Constitution. Despite severe economic constraints, substantial progress in the global health indicators continue to be recorded, especially infant mortality and life expectancy rates. Nevertheless, the health for all as a basic human right remains for a large number of people, especially the most vulnerable groups, not materialized. Global economic recession, poverty, failure of developmental policies, political transformation, human rights violations, overpopulation, uncontrolled urbanization, global militarization, environmental degradation (air pollution, chemical desertification and destructive land use), natural and man-made disasters are responsible for the deterioration of global socio-economic environment of

health. Inequities between and within countries continue to affect developing countries negatively, especially the vulnerable groups. To face this global picture, WHO is undertaking the necessary measures to cope with the new challenge.

Special challenges

New diseases: the emerging pathogens

2. The pandemic of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) continues to challenge international health. In total, WHO estimates that 15 million men, women and children in the world were infected with HIV by late 1993, mainly through heterosexual transmission. Conservatively, WHO projects that by the year 2000 a world total of at least 30 million men, women and children will have been infected with HIV since the start of the pandemic. By the end of the 1990s nearly 10 million deaths related to acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) may be expected, most of them in developing countries. In central and eastern African countries, 30-35 per cent of the sexually active age group (15-40 years) are infected with HIV. Deaths as a result of HIV in these countries will negatively affect economic development and population growth patterns and will increase the disaster vulnerability of these countries in the coming years. WHO responds to WHA42.33 (1989) through cooperation with national programmes, intervention development and support, facilitating HIV research, programme direction, the evolution of global AIDS strategy and collaboration within the United Nations system.

Old communicable diseases

3. Because of the deterioration of the global socio-economic environment of health, some well-known diseases are recurring in dimensions and forms that represent a great challenge to global health. Especially following natural and man-made disasters, diseases that were thought to be under control flare up. Although important progress has been achieved in many fields, especially reaching high levels of vaccination coverage for tetanus, poliomyelitis and measles, and in reducing measles and neonatal tetanus morbidity and mortality, vaccine-preventable diseases continue to threaten the life of internally displaced persons. Cholera and diarrhoeal disease flare after disasters because of breakdowns of water and sanitation services. Nevertheless, two old diseases, malaria and tuberculosis, have remained on the priority list of global diseases in the past few years.

Disasters

4. WHO is trying, within the United Nations system, to provide 29 countries with emergency assistance for over 30 million affected persons in Asia, Africa, the Caucasus, the former Yugoslavia and Central America. The dual spectre of violence and starvation because of drought and civil and ethnic strife is threatening many millions in Rwanda, Burundi, Zaire, Liberia, southern Sudan and Somalia. General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991 represents the main instrument of policy coordination within the United Nations system.

Response activities include emergency health needs assessment (within the inter-agency action of the United Nations), strengthening national health services, sanitation and piped water services, epidemiological surveillance, stockpiling of essential drugs, training of national staff, implementation of vertical programmes for disease control, vector control and rehabilitation of community hospitals.

5. Preparedness activities include provision of technical guidance; support to Member States for the development of programmes for emergency mitigation and preparedness planning; promotion of the goals and objectives of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction; coordination of implementation of health-related projects adopted by the scientific and technical committees of WHO; and education and training in disaster management.

6. WHO action in emergencies is regulated by the WHO Constitution, which states that: WHO will "act as the directing and coordinating authority on international health work" and will "furnish appropriate technical assistance and, in emergencies, necessary aid upon the request or acceptance of Governments". The Constitution also mandated WHO "to provide, or assist in providing, upon the request of the United Nations, health services and facilities to special groups".

7. The World Health Assembly (WHA) has responded to the globalization of disasters by a series of resolutions:

(a) Resolution WHA34.26 (1981) emphasizes the importance of preventive measures and emergency preparedness, and reaffirms the role of WHO as the lead United Nations agency in health aspects of disaster preparedness;

(b) Resolution WHA38.29 (1985) recognizes the need for an integrated response linking emergency health measures with long-term development. It also charges WHO with the technical responsibility for strengthening the health preparedness and response capacity of its Member States;

(c) Resolution WHA42.16 (1989) calls upon the Director-General to support the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and to develop a WHO programme for this United Nations initiative;

(d) Resolution WHA45.21 (1992) urges the Director-General to give high priority to specific countries and to coordinate these and other WHO efforts in emergency preparedness and humanitarian assistance with the humanitarian affairs programme of the United Nations system.

Early warning

8. Many kinds of human, economic and environmental activities do not respect international boundaries: human (refugee waves, illegal emigration), economic (recession), environmental (global weather changes might be moving tropical vectors into new temperate zones, taking viruses like dengue and a variety of encephalitis into new latitudes). Droughts, cyclones, earthquakes, desertification, air pollution, acid rains, nuclear radiation and chemical and industrial accidents and old and emerging pathogens also belong to this

category; the pandemic of AIDS serves as a vivid example of an emerging disease. The mechanism of the evolution of HIV infection makes clear that new pathogens can and will arrive. The threat of well-known diseases is far from being eliminated. Tuberculosis is again on the rise, together with the spread of HIV. Malaria is becoming one of the main killers in many areas of the world, and is recorded spreading world wide. Therapy-resistant strains of pathogens are appearing. Following natural and man-made disasters, epidemics of measles, tetanus, tuberculosis and other vaccine-preventable diseases are occurring, as well as plague, hepatitis and cholera.

9. Resolution WHA46.6 (May 1993) emphasizes the need "to strengthen WHO's capacity for early warning of disasters in general, and disease epidemics in particular, complementing the early warning mechanisms put in place by the United Nations system". The national health surveillance system is the building unit of the global early warning system. The global early warning system must not only collect, analyse and disseminate information on diseases but should also support the creation of a global network of referral laboratories, especially within the WHO collaborating centres network, to verify diagnoses of old and emerging diseases. The system must also have resources of immediate response to early warning signals. Non-governmental organizations and media could be important resources for both WHO global early warning and response systems.

III. REPLIES RECEIVED FROM INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES

[28 April 1994]

1. The new international humanitarian order should oblige States to recognize human rights in their constitutions in order to ensure constitutional protection of human rights from any encroachment thereon.

2. The new international humanitarian order should emphasize, in particular, the need for the universal application of the right to self-determination in the case of peoples living under foreign occupation or domination.

3. New developments with a tangible humanitarian dimension necessitate a review of the international humanitarian order and the formulation of a new strategy to deal with humanitarian issues in a realistic and committed manner within the framework of a new international humanitarian order that has no adverse consequences for human society and ensures respect for the cultural identity of peoples and nations.

4. For the new international humanitarian order to function effectively, firm confidence-building measures must be taken by endowing it with realistic objectives and a practical approach to international issues and human rights in order to promote the well-being of mankind as a whole by formulating universal aims with broad horizons. Governments will have a vitally important role to

play in this regard and private and voluntary organizations will also have a far from negligible role.

5. With regard to the working mechanism of the international humanitarian order, since it is to be formulated through collective participation it should also be put into effect collectively through joint participation by governmental and private institutions in its establishment, monitoring and application with a view to the achievement of the joint aims of mankind as a whole.

6. The new international humanitarian order must improve the management and control the consequences of disasters through a special covenant providing for the legislative, administrative and financial measures needed to that end and also through the establishment of a central body to undertake that task in collaboration with all the countries of the world.

7. The new international humanitarian order which we are seeking to achieve must constitute a humanitarian code that meets the needs of individuals and respect the rights of groups. This order should tackle all the disparities and fill all the gaps in such a way as to achieve harmony and peace for all mankind by dealing with the various economic, social, cultural, political, civil and other aspects of humanitarian issues without any distinction among nations. It should promote solidarity based on joint action to further the common interests of all mankind, develop human society and promote the well-being of all in a spirit of justice, equality and mutual respect.

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES

[24 August 1994]

1. All activities of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are related to promoting a humanitarian order.

2. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies cooperate with most if not all United Nations agencies that work in the humanitarian field and particularly with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in sharing experiences in an attempt to work more effectively and efficiently.

3. During 1993 and 1994, the International Federation, with its world-wide network of members, published several reports and documents which were used to promote the objectives set out in General Assembly resolution 47/106.

4. The most important contributions are as follows: World Disaster Report, 1993; World Disaster Report, 1994; Code of Conduct in Disaster Relief for the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs; a study on child soldiers; a discussion paper on "Assistance to victims of antipersonnel mines".

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REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, QUESTIONS RELATING TO REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS

New international humanitarian order

Report of the Secretary-General

Corrigendum

Page 4, paragraph 13

Replace paragraph 13 by the following text:

13. In the light of the developments outlined above, key aspects relevant to the development of a new humanitarian order are now being comprehensively addressed within the new framework established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/182 and subsequent related resolutions for strengthening the capacity of the United Nations system to respond to humanitarian emergencies.

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Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 48/118 of 20 December 1993, the General Assembly appealed to Member States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations to provide adequate and sufficient financial, material and technical assistance for relief and rehabilitation programmes for the large number of refugees, voluntary returnees and displaced persons and victims of natural disaster and the affected countries; requested all Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to pay particular attention to the protection of special needs of refugee women and children; called upon the Secretary-General, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat and United Nations humanitarian agencies to continue their efforts to mobilize humanitarian assistance for the relief, repatriation, rehabilitation and resettlement of refugees, returnees and displaced persons, including those refugees in urban areas; requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to mobilize adequate financial and material assistance for the full implementation of ongoing projects in rural and urban areas affected by the presence of refugees, returnees and displaced persons; and requested the High Commissioner to continue her efforts with the appropriate United Nations agencies, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental organizations in order to consolidate and increase essential services to refugees, returnees and displaced persons.

2. The General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive and consolidated report on the implementation of the resolution to the Assembly at its forty-ninth session.

II. ACTIVITIES OF THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

3. Since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 48/118, Africa has continued to be plagued by the problems of refugees and forced population displacements.

4. At present, the continent hosts over 7.2 million refugees, a third of the world's refugee population, of whom 5.3 million are assisted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In addition, an estimated 20 million Africans are considered to be internally displaced.

5. Internal conflicts, human rights violations and breakdowns of law and order, in combination with the negative effects of poverty, drought and famine, continue to create unprecedented levels of hardship and suffering in many parts of the continent. These same factors continue to precipitate and cause massive refugee outflows and internal displacement of persons in some countries and to impede access to and delivery of protection and humanitarian assistance to refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons.

6. The persistence of ethnic strife and conflicts, human rights abuses, deterioration in economic development and social progress and lack of responsible and accountable governance have continued to cause new refugee outflows in a number of countries and necessitated the deployment of emergency assistance programmes or adoption of other appropriate humanitarian and political measures in order to attain durable solutions for refugee problems and to avert further refugee outflows through early warning mechanisms as well as timely intervention by the relevant United Nations agencies, intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental organizations.

7. While refugee flows impose intolerable security, social and economic burdens, adverse environmental consequences caused by the large presence of refugees in the countries that have generously continued to provide asylum, the existence of national policies or practices that have a negative impact on the security, safety and well-being of refugees have no doubt exacerbated the root causes of refugee outflows and population displacement in some African countries.

8. Prospects for durable solutions have been and continue to be undermined by renewed tensions or conflicts in some countries, such as Angola, Liberia, Rwanda and Somalia. UNHCR and other United Nations agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations, together with the relevant authorities in countries of asylum and return, are continuing to plan repatriation and reintegration programmes in countries where conditions are conducive. Notable among these is the repatriation of over 1 million Mozambican refugees, which has so far been a successful and exemplary operation.

A. West Africa

9. Attempts to find a peaceful and lasting solution to the problems in Liberia through the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement have virtually failed. Although the Liberian National Transitional Government was sworn in on 7 March 1994, the Government could not extend its authority and control beyond Monrovia. Despite the deployment of forces of the Economic Commission of West African States Military Observer Group (ECOMOG) and the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), the disarmament process came to a halt and the elections scheduled for 7 September 1994 could not take place. A new peace accord was signed at Akosombo, Ghana, on 12 September 1994 by the major warring factions, which agreed to extend the mandate of the present coalition Government to 10 October 1995, the new date set for elections. However, at the time of writing, fierce fighting still continued in various parts of Liberia, with no sign of an improvement in the security situation.

10. Political unrest and the worsening security situation in Liberia has led to further displacement of nationals towards Monrovia as well as the flight of Liberians into the neighbouring countries. In early September 1994, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire recorded new influxes of some 50,000 refugees from Liberia.

11. Despite efforts made by various relief agencies, assistance to internally displaced persons, refugees and returnees within Liberia has been limited because of security problems, especially since August 1994 when the level of hostilities increased dramatically. All relief operations in Upper Lofa have been suspended since the end of 1993, and Gbarnga has also been inaccessible from Monrovia since July 1994. United Nations agencies are now assisting the affected population only in accessible areas in and around Monrovia.

12. The security situation in south-eastern Sierra Leone has worsened since January 1994. Continued fighting has led to the further displacement of nationals as well as some 40,000 returnees in the region. Assistance to this affected population has been limited owing to inaccessibility to the areas.

13. These developments present obstacles to a large-scale repatriation to either Liberia or Sierra Leone under UNHCR auspices. UNHCR will continue to provide assistance to refugees in the countries of asylum in the region and to assist spontaneous repatriation whenever possible. In the first three quarters of 1994, UNHCR assisted 161 Sierra Leoneans and more than 5,500 Liberians to return to their home countries.

14. At the end of January 1994, ethnic conflict in northern Ghana escalated into violent tribal warfare, which resulted in the displacement of approximately 150,000 persons. UNHCR is providing emergency assistance to the affected population to meet their immediate needs and to help rehabilitation upon return to their communities.

15. After several consultative meetings in 1993 and 1994, held jointly with the Governments of Mali and Algeria and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and UNHCR, a quadripartite agreement was signed between all four parties. Two separate tripartite agreements were also concluded with the Governments of Burkina Faso and Mauritania. These agreements created the

necessary conditions for UNHCR involvement in the Malian repatriation and rehabilitation programme, including a bilateral (Algeria-Mali) plan for a pilot repatriation operation. UNHCR established an office in Mali and reinforced it to monitor the implementation of this programme. However, since May 1994 the situation in northern Mali has been volatile, and owing to an increase in attacks by bandits, 12,000 Malians have fled to Burkina Faso.

16. The low rate of implementation of the Pacte National and the growing insecurity in northern Mali have hampered prospects for an organized repatriation programme in 1994.

17. In early January 1994, 8,000 Ghanaians fled into Togo because of violence between ethnic groups in northern Ghana. An emergency assistance programme was established for the benefit of this caseload.

18. Owing to the improvement of the situation in Togo and the formation of a new Government in June 1994, the total number of refugees decreased from 150,000 to 60,000 in Benin and from 150,000 to 100,000 in Ghana. This reduction is the result of spontaneous repatriation.

B. Central Africa

19. The signing of a peace accord between the Government of Chad and the Comité de Sursaut National pour la Paix et la Démocratie at Bangui, Central African Republic, on 10 August 1994 is an encouraging step towards the establishment of conducive conditions for voluntary repatriation. This will also lead to a more effective implementation of humanitarian assistance to refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons in Chad.

20. The quest of UNHCR for durable solutions on behalf of Sudanese refugees, is being pursued through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Africare and the Secours Catholique pour le Developpement.

C. Horn of Africa

21. Faced with the daunting scale of humanitarian needs, creative and flexible assistance approaches continue to be adopted for refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons throughout the Horn of Africa.

22. At September 1994, Ethiopia hosted an estimated 271,000 refugees, comprising 180,000 Somalis in the east, 50,000 Sudanese in the west, 10,000 Djiboutians in the north-east and 25,000 Somalis and 6,000 Kenyans in the south. The repatriation of some 180,000 Somalis in refugee camps in eastern Ethiopia to north-west Somalia is a priority and is of primary concern. An estimated 400,000 refugees have already returned there spontaneously since 1991. This repatriation process has recently gained new momentum with the successful completion of an exercise involving the revalidation of ration cards in all Somali refugee camps, which provides the basis for registration for voluntary repatriation and for related logistical aspects for actual organized return movements to begin as soon as possible. Some 10,000 camp dwellers are expected

to return to north-west Somalia by the end of 1994. Meanwhile, the repatriation of Ethiopian refugees from the Sudan to Tigray and neighbouring provinces, which started late in 1993, continued at varying rates of return, both by road and airlift, into 1994, with 25,000 refugees having returned to date. Improvements in road conditions after the October/November 1994 rains will facilitate transportation of more repatriants by road from the Sudan. A further 25,000 Ethiopian refugees are expected to return before the operation is completed in early 1995.

23. UNHCR operations in Somalia continue to focus on the implementation of a returnee programme in north-west Somalia and on the cross-border operation from Kenya into the Geddo, Middle and Lower Juba regions of southern Somalia. Ongoing programme activities mainly involve the rehabilitation of community-based services and infrastructure, with the objective of enhancing the absorption capacity of returnee reintegration areas, much of which suffered considerable devastation during the civil conflict, particularly in north-west Somalia. Within this framework, quick-impact rehabilitation projects have been, and continue to be, implemented in such sectors as water, health, sanitation, education, agriculture/livestock and shelter in collaboration with United Nations and non-governmental organizations, in close cooperation and coordination with the local authorities. Despite these positive developments in the search for durable solutions, renewed security concerns have once more come to the fore in areas of UNHCR operation. Escalating insecurity owing to banditry/looting and hijacking of humanitarian assistance resources leading to loss of life and property of relief agencies is being reported more frequently than hitherto in the recent past in Somalia. The scaling down of United Nations forces and the general uncertainty surrounding the future presence of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) appear to be contributory factors in the heightening insecurity in southern Somalia, which may have serious implications for the continuation of humanitarian interventions in Somalia.

24. Following recent positive developments in other parts in the Horn of Africa, the prospects of finding a durable solution is brighter. Repatriation movements are gathering momentum. Practical plans are currently being finalized to begin the repatriation of Eritrean refugees from the Sudan to Eritrea in an initial movement involving 25,000 Eritreans as the beginning of an organized repatriation movement for an estimated 400,000 refugees. Some 100,000 refugees are estimated to have returned to Eritrea spontaneously. The repatriation of Ethiopian refugees in the Sudan will resume by land, once the rains in October/November are over. Some 25,000 refugees are expected to return by early 1995, in addition to some 25,000 refugees who have already been repatriated to Ethiopia. Similarly, in the immediate future, the first group of some 10,000 Ethiopian refugees from camps in Djibouti will begin their return journey, bringing to an end a long waiting period which began in December 1993.

25. Meanwhile, in the Djibouti refugee camps, preparatory measures are being taken to promote the voluntary repatriation of Somalis to north-west Somalia. There are close to 20,000 Somalis in the refugee camps in Djibouti. Parallel to the repatriation process is the ongoing transfer exercise from Djiboutiville to camps of refugees/displaced persons whose continuing presence in the city has overextended the social and economic services/facilities, with which the authorities can no longer cope. Some 15,000 Somali refugees in the camps have

already registered for voluntary repatriation; their departure will accelerate the pace of the transfer exercise to the camps and the subsequent repatriation.

D. Southern Africa

26. The successful mass voluntary repatriation movement of Mozambican refugees from Malawi continues to proceed smoothly. The assisted refugee population of 1,058,500 at the beginning of 1993 had dwindled to some 200,000 by September 1994. Following the departure of refugees and upon the request of the Government, funds have been made available for the demolition of latrines and houses vacated by departing refugees. The cleared land is being used by local peasants for agricultural purposes. Dams are also being constructed to avoid soil erosion.

27. The continuing care and maintenance assistance to Mozambican refugees included a number of projects in Malawi to mitigate the environmental impact caused by the presence of refugees. These include reafforestation, energy conservation and fuel provision projects. Most of these activities are expected to continue into 1995.

28. While these measures have been significant, the overwhelming pressure from the exceptionally large number of refugees outweighed the mitigative efforts. The environmental degradation, which needs immediate and sustained restoration efforts, remains to be addressed in the post-repatriation phase, when the UNHCR presence and input will have been reduced. The Government of Malawi is about to launch an appeal to international donors for the rehabilitation of areas affected by Mozambican refugees. UNHCR will continue its efforts to sensitize a wide range of donors and to coordinate their input to the programme.

29. The UNHCR-organized repatriation operation for South African refugees and exiles was successfully completed on 31 December 1993.

30. UNHCR expenditure and allocations for assistance in Africa in 1993 totalled $325.1 million, of which $188.5 million were made available from general programme funds and $136.6 million came from special programmes funds. The initial 1994 general programmes target approved by the Executive Committee at its forty-fourth session was $164.3 million. The amount required for special programmes in 1994 was estimated at $222.3 million at mid-year.

31. During the period covered by the present report, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, on behalf of the United Nations system, issued appeals for emergency assistance to the populations affected by the crises in Angola, Burundi, Kenya, Liberia, Rwanda, the Sudan and Zaire. The humanitarian programmes outlined in these appeals are targeted primarily at internally displaced persons, refugees, returnees and other vulnerable population groups. Of a total of $1.4 billion sought for emergency assistance to Africa, $866.2 million has been received to date by the appealing agencies and organizations.

32. Recognizing the dual impact of the presence of refugees on the environment, and of the hostile environment on the well-being of refugees, UNHCR has been reinforcing its efforts to address environmental problems in the following ways:

(a) By adopting a more ecologically sensitive approach in the planning and implementation of refugee site management. For instance, an expanded provision of fuel and fuel-efficient stoves is increasingly being considered and an improved design for a drainage/waste water system is being applied in many sites;

(b) By undertaking studies in the sectors of shelter, water and sanitation to minimize the impact on the surroundings and to improve the conditions of refugee camps and settlements in an ecologically sound manner;

(c) By recognizing that refugees themselves are an important collective force for positive change. Through the People-Oriented Planning training programme and greater refugee participation in the development and implementation of UNHCR programmes, awareness of environmental conservation is being promoted;

(d) By providing funds for reafforestation projects implemented by government departments and non-governmental organizations, for example in Guinea, Malawi, Rwanda, the Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania.

III. ACTIVITIES OF THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

33. The strategy of the World Food Programme (WFP) is to assist refugees and internally displaced persons in their country of asylum or origin by endeavouring to meet their basic food needs where they cannot be met by other means. Where feasible, self-sufficiency among refugees and internally displaced persons is encouraged by promoting food production and other income-generating activities in the country of asylum or origin.

34. In the search for durable solutions, WFP encourages either the permanent settlement and integration of refugees in host countries or the repatriation to and reintegration in their countries of origin. Internally displaced persons are similarly provided food assistance to help in their resettlement. Increasingly, WFP gives priority to returnees and internally displaced persons in the targeting of rehabilitation and reconstruction assistance in countries affected by man-made disasters, through both emergency and development type activities. Such assistance gives specific attention to the continuum from relief to rehabilitation and development activities.

35. The above strategy is reflected in the close partnership established between WFP and UNHCR, which has since 1 January 1992 been manifested in the effective implementation of joint working arrangements to assist refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons. Under the current phase of these arrangements, WFP has continued to assume responsibility for mobilizing the totality of basic food requirements and related external transport and internal transport, storage and handling costs in all jointly assessed refugee and returnee and internally displaced person situations where the caseload exceeds

5,000 beneficiaries. WFP also handles internal transport and delivery of food consignments to the extended delivery points within the recipient countries concerned where it is also gradually assuming responsibility for the management of warehouses.

36. New WFP commitments of over 784,000 tonnes of food, together with related ocean freight and internal transport costs, were confirmed during the first half of 1994 for refugees, returnee and internally displaced persons operations in Africa. These operations have incurred costs of over $352 million to WFP and target some 7.8 million persons in 16 countries. Current WFP refugee feeding operations are assisting over 7 million refugees and involve a food commitment of over 780,000 tonnes, valued at $366 million, including related transport costs. The total number of internally displaced persons currently receiving WFP food assistance is over 10 million persons, mostly in Angola, Mozambique, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia and the Sudan. The combined commitments of WFP for these operations involve over 770,000 tonnes of food at a total cost of some $385 million, including transport. Projected emergency requirements for refugee, returnee and internally displaced feeding operations in Africa during 1995 are expected to amount to over 2.2 million tonnes for some 14.3 million persons in some 28 countries.

37. Among the major refugee and internally displaced person operations in Africa in which WFP is involved are the following:

(a) In the Liberia region, WFP is assisting over 2 million victims of the three-year old civil conflict, of whom some 750,000 are refugees in Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone, with the remainder being internally displaced persons in Liberia and Sierra Leone. This operation involves an annual food commitment of around 200,000 tonnes;

(b) During 1993, WFP food aid was provided to nearly 1 million Mozambican refugees in Malawi, Swaziland, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The general peace agreement signed in October 1992 has encouraged many Mozambican refugees and internally displaced persons to return home. As of August 1994, over 1.3 million people had returned to their country, of whom over 100,000 returned during 1992 and 600,000 during 1993. Food assistance is provided to the returnees during reintegration, land clearance and planting. It is also provided to support the rehabilitation and reconstruction of roads, health posts and other community service infrastructure. The total WFP commitment to support refugees and returnees over the 18-month period ending June 1995 is over 370,000 tonnes of food;

(c) WFP is assisting some 930,000 refugees in Ethiopia, the Sudan, Djibouti and Kenya, with a 1993 commitment of more than 250,000 tonnes of food at a cost of over $116 million. Brighter prospects for peace and stability in the region have already resulted in decreasing numbers of Somali refugees in Ethiopia and, to a lesser extent, Kenya. Plans are under way to assist in the voluntary repatriation of many of the more than 300,000 Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees in the Sudan, 200,000 Somali refugees in Kenya and 20,000 Somali refugees in Djibouti;

(d) In November 1993, WFP launched a massive relief effort to assist the victims of ethnic conflict in Burundi. Following the attempt to topple the Government in Burundi at the end of October 1993, WFP committed some 209,000 tonnes of food commodities to internally displaced persons within Burundi and for Burundi refugees in Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zaire. Food and transport costs amount to $109 million for a caseload of over one million persons in Burundi and neighbouring countries;

(e) In Rwanda, following the civil conflict in February 1993, WFP began assisting displaced persons, with the caseload peaking at 900,000. A food commitment of 125,000 tonnes was made for this operation at a total cost of $71 million. This assistance, which terminated in March 1994, was resumed a few months later under a new operation in response to the unprecedented civil strife in Rwanda following the April 1994 deaths of the Presidents of both Rwanda and Burundi in a plane crash. In response, WFP has so far approved new food commitments in the region for some 150,000 tonnes of food, valued at over $100 million. Food resources for these activities have also been available from earlier commitments made to the earlier Burundi regional operation. Food assistance has mainly targeted over 700,000 internally displaced persons in Rwanda, 500,000 refugees in the United Republic of Tanzania and an estimated 1.7 million refugees in Zaire.

38. WFP is also assisting with the supply and delivery of food to several other smaller refugee populations in Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Congo, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Rwanda, Uganda, Togo, Zambia and Zaire.